DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 780 HE 014 526

AUTHOR Gall, Linda A.; Vogel, Francis X.
TITLE Attitudes of University Faculty Toward Aging and Retirement.
PUB DATE [81]
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Development; *Aging (Individuals); *College Faculty; Comparative Analysis; Full Time Faculty; Higher Education; Institutional Research; *Job Satisfaction; Part Time Faculty; Place of Residence; Recreational Activities; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Retirement
IDENTIFIERS *Northeastern Illinois University

ABSTRACT

The attitudes of faculty members of the College of Arts and Sciences at Northeastern Illinois University (UNI) were surveyed. The 85 respondents excluded faculty in administrative positions. A significant difference was found in faculty plans for retirement: 47 percent wished to live in the city; 24 percent in the suburbs, and 29 percent in the country. Fifty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they would continue working full-time in their present position if offered the opportunity as an alternative to retiring. With respect to this decision, personal satisfaction was cited as being the primary motivation for delaying retirement. For part-time faculty, 62 percent indicated that they would elect to continue working part-time in their present position if offered the opportunity as an alternative to retiring. Fifty percent of the respondents were willing to participate in a university sponsored preretirement planning program, while 26 percent were opposed to participation, and 24 percent were undecided. Scores on the Facts of Aging Quiz indicated no significant differences between three age groups: 30-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50-59 years. The average rate of accuracy for respondents was 61.1 percent. Three possible reasons for these scores include: they are not aware of the problems and blessings of the aged; they are not concerned about aging because it is not their problem yet; or they are fearful of facing the realities of aging and the effects it may have on them. Leisure time activities, type of housing preferred, and desired location for retirement for the three age groups were also compared. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED208780

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE
The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: HE
In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

ATTITUDES OF UNIVERSITY FACULTY TOWARD AGING AND RETIREMENT

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Linda A Gall
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Linda A. Gall, M.A. Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University
5006 W. Lawrence
Chicago, IL 60630

Francis X. Vogel, Ph.D Counselor Education
Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N. St. Louis
Chicago, IL 60625

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

HE 014 526

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the attitudes of professional people concerning aging and retirement. Questionnaire data was collected from teaching faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences at an urban university. Although there were few statistically significant differences, there were numerous interesting findings. The importance of more study in the area of attitudes and planning for retirement is suggested.

A myriad of material has been written about aging and retirement including articles and books on how to prepare for that stage of one's development. However, most of the publications are directed toward people standing at the threshold of retirement. In light of current economic conditions, people will need to conceptualize the idea long before they approach the work force exit.

While people currently under age 45 can look forward to a longer average life and better health than people currently over 45 years of age, they will not be able to retire as early as their parents did, quitting work entirely and depending on the government and pensions for most of their support. By approximately 2010, when the post World War II baby boom generation starts retiring, half of all Americans will be 40 or over. The fact that the war babies have not had enough children to replace themselves is coupled with the lengthening of the life span. Thus, we will have fewer young people supporting the many older people through Social Security taxes. The U. S. government is examining the alternative of scaling back government-paid retirement benefits. What this means is that people now in the early or middle stages of their careers will have to supply more of their old-age

income by saving and investing for it sooner and staying on the job for extra years [Runde, 1981]. This is a strange concept to comprehend - pension problems and social security reductions seem quite remote to someone who is 20 or 30 years away from retirement.

The need for retirement guidance has led to the development of pre-retirement programs. These programs are designed to ease the transition to retirement and to reduce the problems which may be encountered in retirement.

A recent study [Kalt & Kohn, 1975] surveyed retirees as to topics they felt would be of real interest and importance to the person about to retire. Their preferences included: medical insurance, company retirement plan and social security benefits.

A study of white-collar working women [Prentis, 1980] generated similar results and included: taxes, death benefits, estate planning, retirement attitudes, second careers and aging information.

Another recent study [Morrison, 1976] brought to light the fact that the majority of respondents had been thinking about financial adequacy in retirement but had not calculated what their monetary needs would be. The reason they cited for not performing such

planning was that they did not know how to perform such analysis. The respondents were aware of their dilema and expressed need for assistance.

Another interesting point which Morrison makes is that retirement preparation needs to be undertaken 10 to 15 years from the retirement age to allow for advance planning and decision-making well before retirement. Respondents to the Prentis survey indicated the ages of thirty to thirty-nine as the appropriate time to start planning.

A study conducted at the University of California [Patton, 1977] raised another interesting point. Approximately one-quarter of the current employees reported that they were not looking forward to retirement. One professor of biological sciences offered the following, "The problem I see about retirement is the failure of our society to appreciate the worth of all the education experience, teaching quality and knowhow packed into an academic. One can be a professor one minute, then a park bench occupant the next...The greatest tragedy of retirement is the lack of imagination of our institutions including universities to develop a plan whereby individuals' worth and self-esteem can be maintained in a meaningful way."

The present study tried to determine the attitudes of university faculty, age thirty to fifty-nine, toward aging and retirement.

The Research Design

Participants were members of the bargaining unit within the College of Arts and Sciences at Northeastern Illinois University (UNI). UNI is a fully accredited public, urban, commuter university with an enrollment of 10,100 students, serving Chicago and suburbs. The College of Arts and Sciences is comprised of twenty-six departments containing a total of 256 faculty members. For the purposes of this study faculty members in administrative positions - not members of the bargaining unit - were excluded. The sample population then became 230.

The instrument utilized to conduct the study was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers which contained some questions from other research studies [Beutner & Cryne, 1979; Palmore, 1977; Staub, 1979].

Of the 230 questionnaires sent, 85 were returned. Return of the completed questionnaire was assumed to imply consent to participate in the study; failure to return the questionnaire was assumed to imply lack of consent. The 36.9% return rate is based on the initial

contact alone. Although subjects were free to contact the investigators, only one did. We assume, therefore, that the instructions in our questionnaire were understood by the participants.

The stratified sample population was teaching faculty between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine, forty and forty-nine, and fifty and fifty-nine. The data collected was statistically analyzed using the chi-square test and the analysis of variance.

Implications

The question "When I retire I plan to live (a) in the city (b) in the country (c) in the suburbs" showed a significant difference at the .05 level. 47% of the respondents chose to live in the city; 24% chose the suburbs; and 29% elected to live in the country. Of the 29% who chose to live in the country, 59% were between the ages of forty and forty-nine. Upon closer examination of the age forty to forty-four group versus the forty-five to forty-nine group no differences were evident.

While not statistically significant, other points did surface. 55% of the respondents indicated they would continue working full-time in their present position if offered the opportunity and thus defer retirement. Personal satisfaction was cited as being

the primary motivation. 28% were undecided as to what they would do if such an opportunity were offered them.

Regarding part-time employment, 62% of the respondents would elect to continue working part-time in their present position if offered the opportunity and thus defer retirement. Although there were no significant differences between the groups on this question, 38% of the affirmative responses were from participants age thirty to thirty-nine as opposed to only 28% affirmative responses from participants age fifty to fifty-nine. All groups were equally divided between personal satisfaction and increased income as to their motivation for working part-time beyond retirement.

All three groups had similar responses as to how they felt about planning for retirement. 42% replied that they felt very positive; 44% reported they felt less positive; and only 13% of the respondents reported feeling negative.

With regard to their willingness to participate in a university sponsored pre-retirement planning program, 50% responded that they would participate as opposed to 26% who would not and 24% who were undecided. Again, there were no significant differences apparent.

Travel alone or with relatives was the modal response chosen by all three groups as to their choice

of leisure activities. Reading was the second choice of both the thirty to thirty-nine group and the forty to forty-nine group. The second choice of the fifty to fifty-nine group was to make or build something. All three groups ranked pursuing an artistic interest quite highly.

In response to the question regarding the type of housing they would prefer, the majority of participants in all three groups chose smaller home or same home. It was interesting to note, however, that no respondents in the forty to forty-nine group wished to live in an apartment. 13% of the respondents in this group chose a larger home which compares with no respondents in either of the other groups making this selection.

With regard to where to retire, 58% did not want to move whereas 33% elected to move to a different climate. It was also interesting to note that 46% of the respondents who did not want to move were between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine. Living close to children had a low priority for all groups and was not selected by anyone in the fifty to fifty-nine group.

Finally, there were no significant differences between the groups scores on the Facts of Aging Quiz. The thirty to thirty-nine group had a mean score of 11.22; the forty to forty-nine group had a mean score of 10.67; and the fifty to fifty-nine group had a mean

score of 11.28. The result was an average rate of 61.1% accuracy. Three possible causes for these scores include: 1) they are not aware of the problems and blessings of the aged; 2) they are not concerned about aging because it is not their problem yet; 3) they are fearful of facing the realities of aging and the effects it may have on them.

The results of this study pertain to a single occupation and involves a relatively small number of respondents. Other larger studies with more diverse samples may show greater differences. Thus, more research needs to be done before definitive statements about age based attitudes toward aging and retirement can be made.

References

Beutner, G., & Cryne, A. Retirement Differences in Attitudes, Preparatory Behavior and Needs Perception Among Male and Female University Employees. State University of New York, Buffalo, November 1979, 1-15.

Kalt, N. C., & Kohn, M. H. Pre-Retirement Counseling: Characteristics of Programs and Preferences of Retirees. Gerontologist, 1975, 15, 179-181.

Morrison, M. H. Planning for Income Adequacy in Retirement: The Expectations of Current Workers. Gerontologist, 1976, 16, 542.

Palmore, E. Facts on Aging: A Short Quiz. Gerontologist, 1977, 17, 315-320.

Patton, C. V. Early Retirement in Academia: Making the Decision. Gerontologist, 1977, 17, 350.

Prentis, R. S. White-Collar Working Women's Perception of Retirement. Gerontologist, 1980, 20, 93-94.

Runde, R. Planning Now for Your Longer Life. Money, March 1981, 52-63.

Staub, M. The Attitudes of Younger Husbands and Wives Toward Aging and Retirement. Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, April 1979, 25-36 (unpublished).